PhD position in protistology (taxonomy, phylgeoegraphy, ecology)

The Laboratory of Soil Biodiversity, University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland is a dynamic multicultural research group focusing primarily in the study of protist diversity and ecology, with a strong focus on testate amoebae but also other soil organisms and a broader range of topics in general ecology. Current and past projects include work on taxonomy, phylogeny, biogeography, macroecology, observational and experimental community and ecosystem ecology, global change ecology, palaeoecology and forensic ecology. We use classical microscopy as well as molecular approaches (DNA barcoding, metabarcoding, high throughput sequencing).

The PhD student will study the morphological and molecular diversity of protists (ideally testate amoebae, the main group studied in the lab) their ecology and geographical distribution using morphological and molecular approaches. The exact topic is however open to discussion but a passion for natural history and biodiversity is a clear advantage. The work is primarily based in Switzerland but involves international collaboration and possibly some work abroad for short visits and field trips.

Qualifications:
We seek an enthusiastic person with a true passion for natural sciences and highest work ethic standards. The PhD student will be conducting research both in the field and in the lab. A driving license and reasonably good physical capacity to conduct field work possibly in remote and challenging environments are therefore requirements for this position. Candidates should have a Master degree in biology, ideally with an emphasis on ecology, taxonomy and natural sciences in general.

The position involves teaching (practical labs at bachelor and/or master level in French or English on one or more of the following topics: general protistology, soil biology, palaeoecology, problem-based learning, seminars). Strong communication skills in verbal and written English are required for the research. Basic knowledge of the French language is desirable for teaching, but is not a condition for recruitment. The work involves microscopy, molecular work and numerical analyses (using R). Good numerical and statistical skills, including the use of bioinformatic pipelines are desirable (but the latter can be acquired).

We offer excellent working conditions in a wonderful setting. Neuchâtel is a small town (ca. 50k inhabitants) on the shore of Lake Neuchâtel and directly bordered by the Jura Mountains with infinite opportunities for outdoor activities.

Applications will be reviewed as they arrive and a decision may be taken as early as April 2022. The position will start on September 1st 2022. This is a 4 years position with a 5th year possible, if justified.

Please address any further enquiries and send your application (cv, list of publications if any and at least abstracts of theses and publications, motivation letter, names and contact of two reference persons) to: edward.mitchell@unine.ch

Edward Mitchell
Laboratory of Soil Biodiversity, University of Neuchâtel,
Rue Emile-Argand 11, 2000 Neuchâtel, Switzerland